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General Assembly
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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 27 January 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to wreak havoc throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, killing people and destroying homes and properties as it persists in its bloody military campaign against the Palestinian people. As it relentlessly pursues this military campaign, the occupying Power continues to commit horrific war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against the Palestinian civilian population under occupation.

In the pre-dawn hours of yesterday, Sunday, 26 January 2003, the Israeli occupying forces launched massive assaults against Gaza City. The occupying forces carried out the deepest raids in the Gaza Strip, which is supposed to be under full Palestinian control under the agreements reached, since the start of the Israeli military campaign in September 2000. Dozens of Israeli armoured carriers, tanks and bulldozers, backed by helicopter gunships firing missiles, raided the city from three directions. At least 100 workshops were destroyed by the Israeli occupying forces, who used dynamite to blow up the buildings, including mechanical workshops, metal shops, carpentry shops, clothing manufacturing shops, grocery shops and dozens of other shops located in the market area on the main street of the Zeitun neighbourhood in Gaza City. In addition, several Palestinian homes were destroyed and numerous roads, telephone and electricity lines and at least four bridges in the area were damaged by the occupying forces. By the end of the assault, the Israeli occupying forces had not only caused vast destruction in the area, but had also killed 13 Palestinians and wounded dozens of others. Moreover, that same day, the occupying forces killed an 8-year-old Palestinian boy, Ali Talab Al-Ghareer, and wounded his 6-year-old brother, Ala', as they played on the outskirts of the Rafah refugee camp.

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While Israel, the occupying Power, has claimed that this massive attack was launched to destroy weapons manufacturing facilities, it is starkly evident, from the number and type of facilities destroyed, that the real Israeli aim is the destruction of all Palestinian capabilities, whether they be manufacturing, economic or otherwise. As a result, the livelihood of thousands of Palestinians has been destroyed, with more than half of the population now living below the poverty line and suffering and hardship deepening with each passing day. Indeed, since the start of this brutal military campaign, the Israeli occupying forces have clearly sought to inflict as much damage and loss as possible on the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This has been achieved through countless military assaults on Palestinian cities, towns, villages and refugee camps, the wanton destruction of homes, properties and vital infrastructure and the continuous siege on Palestinian areas, including the imposition of the severest restrictions on the movement of persons and goods and of round-the-clock curfews. The ongoing siege has been effected through the repeated reoccupation of Palestinian areas by the Israeli occupying forces, specifically in the West Bank.

It now appears as though the occupying forces are preparing to launch a full-scale reoccupation of the Gaza Strip. In this regard, the Israeli Minister of Defense, Mr. Shaul Mofaz, when questioned with regard to Israel's intentions towards Gaza, including a possible reoccupation, stated, "I think we must keep all our options open. Even this option of taking over the Strip was considered in the past and is still being considered. We will decide when to carry it out". Such threats by Mr. Mofaz, who has previously been implicated in war crimes, must be taken seriously, particularly in light of the actions carried out by the Israeli occupying forces in the 28 months since this military campaign began. An Israeli reoccupation of the densely populated Gaza Strip will only cause more death, destruction and devastation for the Palestinian people. This cannot be allowed to occur.

We call upon the Security Council to take all necessary measures to bring a halt to the Israeli onslaught against the Palestinian people. The civilian population under Israel's occupation must be protected as Israel continues daily to commit serious violations and grave breaches all norms of international law and international humanitarian law as it carries out this vicious military campaign throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Security Council must uphold its duty for the maintenance of international peace and security as the current situation threatens to fuel even more violence and to further destabilize the area and potentially destabilize the region as a whole.

This letter is in follow-up to my previous 153 letters to you regarding the crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 21 January 2003 (A/ES-10/211-S/2003/74), constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Accordingly, in follow up to the above-mentioned letters, I regret to inform you that, in the six days since my last letter to you, the Israeli occupying forces have killed at least 23 Palestinians, including children, raising the total number of martyrs

to 2,088 Palestinians. (The names of the martyrs that have been identified thus far are contained in the annex to the present letter.)

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Annex to the letter dated 27 January 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (Thursday, 23 January 2003, through Monday, 27 January 2003)

Thursday, 23 January 2003

Ahmed Anwar Saqwr (18 years old) (died from wounds sustained earlier)

Friday, 24 January 2003

1. Suad Hassan Masoud Jawadallah
2. Ayman Rashid Hilmi Hinawi
3. Nour Eldin Ahmed Abdelfatah Ezreqat
4. Mohammed Selim Al-Masdar
5. Fatma Mohammed Darwish Al-Mashharawy

Saturday, 25 January 2003

1. Hassan Yussef Fayad
2. Khalil Mohammed Jad

Sunday, 26 January 2003

1. Ashraf Sameeh Kaheel
2. Mohammed Rashad Yussef Obeid
3. Ahmed Hasan Saleh Al-Fayoumi
4. Wisam Fayez Yussef Hasan Mutair
5. Mohammed Akram Badawi Al-Nakhaleh
6. Ala' Zuhair Rizq Khalifeh
7. Rami Fathi Hasan Issa
8. Eyad Jibril Akawi (18 years old)
9. Mustafa Marwan Waleed Rahmi
10. Ahmed Shahadeh Ahmed Abed
11. Khaled Ali Hasan Shaloof (17 years old)
12. Ayman Yussef Al-Hatab (16 years old)
13. Ahmed Tayseer Awad
14. Ali Talab Al-Ghareer (8 years old)

Monday, 27 January 2003

Sami Mahmoud Zu'rob

* The total number of Palestinians killed by the Israeli occupying forces since 28 September 2000 is 2,088 martyrs.